

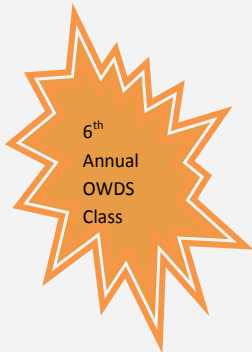


Robert M. Maccarone, Deputy Commissioner and Director
Bernard Wilson, Supervisor Contract Administration
Cynthia Blair, Editor-in-Chief

NYS DCJS Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives: IN TOUCH WITH Offender Workforce Development Specialists (OWDS)

News

Cattaraugus County Probation Department Pilots
Ready, Set, Grow! for High School Students on Probation
RSW! Sex Offender groups expand



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GCDF News

Welcome to *In Touch with OWDS* an electronic newsletter from the New York State DCJS Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives.

Leading the Way... Cattaraugus County Probation Department held the first session of the pilot **Ready, Set, Grow! (RSW)! Program for High School student probationers. As students returned to school, high school students on probation in Olean were asked to participate in the brand new program. Dale Wilkinson, Cattaraugus County One Stop Employment Counselor and Brielyn McBride Cattaraugus probation officer ...**

facilitated the group. Both **Dale** and **Brielyn** are OWDS certified; **Dale** is also a GCDF Instructor. Cattaraugus Probation Director, **Gerry Zimmerman** decided it was time to put in place the program, originally conceived during **OWDS training in Chautauqua County 2011**. An integral part of OWDS training is the Action Plan presented by each group to the class during week three of the 180-hour course. **Cattaraugus County** modified the **RSW!** training and tailored it to the needs of youth. Several of the **Cattaraugus** trained officers were juvenile probation officers. **Gordon Diffenderfer**, the Youth probation Supervisor and Director Zimmerman asked **Brielyn** and **Dale** to tailor the program based on the original concept from the OWDS training. Eight high school probationers began the program and six of those completed. While attending the group over the five week period, the students encountered fewer disciplinary



problems and some made academic strides. The OWDS facilitators were informed by the students that they wanted the sessions to continue, some because it gave them something to do while others enjoyed the free pizza and pop. **Dale** observed that "the legal information provided seemed to hit home with them. The hope is that this will help to prevent future poor, impulsive decision-making." The participants were from OWDS, **Nila McIntyre's** caseload. **Nila** and **Gordon** were part of the OWDS group that developed the concept. Through the leadership of Director Zimmerman and with the cooperation of Olean Senior High School this program was brought to fruition.

RSW! Sex Offenders Expands

Albany and **Ulster** County Probation Departments have both been holding **Ready, Set, Work!** Groups for Sex Offenders. At the end of 2012, **Leonard Price**, a probation officer with **Schoharie** County and a 2011 graduate of the OWDS training, held his department's first **RSW!** for Sex Offenders. **Dutchess County** is also slated to begin **RSW!** for Sex Offenders this year.

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo Announces "Work for Success" Employment Initiative for the Formerly Incarcerated

In February 2012, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced "Work for Success"-- a jobs initiative aimed at reducing the high unemployment rate among the thousands of New Yorkers returning home from prison. "Work for Success" incorporates a comprehensive statewide approach to increase job readiness and improve employment outcomes for the formerly incarcerated individuals. This initiative will benefit all New Yorkers by creating more tax-paying, law-abiding citizens, which will make streets safer and strengthen the state's entire economy. "Tens of thousands of people leave New York State prisons each year and without employment most are at higher risk of returning to incarceration," Governor Cuomo said. "The 'Work for Success' initiative will reduce poverty and joblessness for some of our state's hardest to employ citizens, while enhancing public safety and improving economic conditions for the families and communities to which they return."

Members of the Executive Committee include members of the Governor's Office, as well as representatives from the following organizations:

- Brooklyn Treatment Alternative to Crime
- Buffalo Urban League
- Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services
- Center for Community Alternatives
- Council of State Governments Justice Center
- The Doe Fund
- F•E•G•S Health and Human Services System
- Fortune Society
- Greenhope Services for Women
- Hour Children
- Legal Action Center
- National Skills Coalition
- Osborne Association
- Prisoner Reentry Institute at John Jay College of Criminal Justice
- STRIVE
- Urban Institute

Work for Success is led by policy makers, representatives from government agencies, and practitioners from across the nation with expertise in employment services for the formerly incarcerated.



Mindy Tarlow, Chair, Work for Success

The Executive Committee for Work for Success is chaired by **Mindy Tarlow, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer, of the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)**, a non-profit provider that offers comprehensive employment services exclusively for people with criminal records. CEO promotes the evidence-based practices in which Work for Success will be grounded. A recent study published by research corporation MDRC found that CEO's employment model for newly released prison inmates resulted in a 22 percent decrease in new convictions.

The "Work for Success" Program model includes three components: the Institutional (Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, Client-Matching and Building Community Capacity).

DCJS OPCA OWDS BY THE NUMBERS

Total OWDS trained by NIC out of State=17
Total trained by DCJS/OPCA 114
Total Certified OWDS 131

The Next NYS NIC In-State Partnership Training begins March 18, 2012

Offender Employment Retention Specialist (OERS) Training

Fran Ricci OWDS Instructor And **Maribel DeJesus** 2012 OWDS graduate, were both members of the OERS class held in Denver in October 2012. They join OWDS: **Mark Pisano**, Ulster County Probation; **Anne Fowler**, **Dale Wilkinson** and **Collin Quigley**, Cattaraugus County Probation; **Craig MacNeil**, Albany County Probation; and **Cynthia Blair** from DCJS as certified OERS. For information on this training contact: **P. Elizabeth Taylor**, Correctional Program Specialist, National Institute of Corrections at petaylor@bop.gov

Things to Know...

What is Offender Employment Retention?

Offender Employment Retention is the ability of the offender to maintain active and ongoing attachment to the workforce over time

(NIC OERS Broadcast November 2011)

FOR **OERS** and society
Offender Employment Retention
Is
Worth the Work!

For those of you who missed the broadcast you can see it or order a copy using the following link:
<http://nicic.gov/Library/024978>



Since completing the DCJS OPCA sponsored OWDS training June of 2012 in Albany, **Theresa Rodriguez** of EAC's Bronx TASC Mental Health Court Program and **Maribel De Jesus** of BASICS, Inc. have worked together to increase the opportunity for offenders within the **Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, LGBT** community. This undertaking is a direct result of the OWDS training they received in Albany in 2012. The training required each team to produce an Action Plan. The 2012 keynote speaker at the OWDS graduation was Ms. Patricia E. Taylor, a Correctional Program Specialist at the National Institute of Correction. Ms. Taylor encouraged Maribel and Theresa to pursue their idea especially since working with this population is an emerging issue in criminal justice. Ms. Taylor also put them in touch with Ms. Lorie Brisbin, NICs Project Manager for the LGBT initiatives. Theresa and Maribel have continued to canvass the LGBT community to identify the needs of this population and determine what would be helpful to them in obtaining employment upon release from incarceration. After conducting a video conference with women at the Bedford Hill Correctional Facility and meeting with several leaders within the LGBT community, they learned that there is a great need for an agency that focuses on the needs of the LGBT community and provides a place where their specific needs can be met while receiving **RSW!** (Ready, Set, Work!) training. Theresa and Maribel hope to find a Fiscal Sponsor who will support them in this major undertaking.

Cattaraugus RSW!—Mental Health Pilot Results

Cattaraugus County piloted the **RSW! for Persons in Mental Health Recovery** in May of 2012, with outstanding results according to **Denise Lengvasky**, 2011 OWDS graduate and co-facilitator of the program. **Denise** reported that *"the first person to obtain a job from the RSW! --MH Group had been receiving SSI and is not able to read or write . The group facilitators helped him with the reading and writing portions of RSW! and his class participation increased as the group continued. He began working part-time at K-Mart stocking shelves and putting bicycles together. . He loves his job. He said that attending the RSW! - MH Group and AA meetings had a lot to do with his decision to look for work and his ability to succeed.*

Eleven individuals started the program and eight successfully completed. Four obtained employment; one is employed full time with benefits. Two individuals obtained part-time employment. One has two part-time jobs. Another participant plans to register for the GED classes held at the Cattaraugus Probation Department and once completed, she would like to do volunteer work as a peer advocate. **Ann Faulkner**, one of the OWDS group co-facilitators, plans to do another **RSW!--Persons in Mental Health Recovery** Group. She felt the participants responded well to the speakers from other agencies and plans to include more speakers in the regular **RSW!** Groups.

Probation Director Gerry Zimmerman writes the following: *"As you will see from the roster, several of our probationers with MH issues were able to secure employment after completing the program. Twenty-four percent (24%) of our adult caseload have an Axis I diagnosis, The availability of **RSW!** for persons with MH needs provides another tool for probation officers. Additionally, it has been a good experience for the officers, who have reported witnessing the change in probationers that occurs when these individuals actually complete the program and secure employment. It has validated all the hard work probation officers have put into the program. For some probationers who have completed the program, this marks one of the first measurable successes that they have had in their lives. **Thanks for all the work you have put into making this available to practitioners in the trenches.**"*



Global Career Development Facilitator Congratulations to Leonard Price from Schoharie County Probation 2011



Leonard Price with OPCA Director Robert Maccarone at 2011 Graduation

Ready, Set, Work! 2012

Ready Set Work! 2012 Performance Outcomes

In 2012, OPCA obtained information from 22 agencies, which held 81 **RSW!** Groups. A total of 517 offenders completed the **RSW!** Groups--266 obtained employment within 90 days. A 51% employment rate was achieved for 2012. A closer look at the information reveals that 11 Probation

Departments held 35 groups with 213 completing and 109 obtaining employment within 90 days—a 51% employment rate. The other agencies were Probation Violation Residential Centers (PVRC's), 200% of Poverty Programs and Federal Probation. These 11 programs held 46 **RSW!** Groups, with 304 offenders completing and 157 participants obtaining employment,--a 52% employment rate.

NEW RSW! Programs

Probation Programs holding their first **RSW!** included Chenango, Rensselaer and Schoharie Counties. ATI Programs that began RSW! Programs in 2012 included Family of Woodstock, Inc. in Ulster County, the Altamont Program in Onondaga County, and the Community Transition Center in Dutchess County.

OWDS Corner

We invite original articles from Offender Workforce Development Specialists. We will try to share one in each issue

Didn't see **your** name here? Let us know what you are doing. Also please contact Cynthia Blair if you need technical assistance with your **Ready, Set Work!** or **Retention Counts**

RSW! Worth Noting from Albany County

Albany County has the longest running **RSW!** Program. **Craig MacNeil**, Probation Assistant, OWDS, GCDF, OERS facilitates the **RSW!** Program for Albany County. Program outcomes support the goal that **RSW!** participants completing the program are more likely obtain employment and less likely to violate Probation.

Of the 20 probationers who completed **RSW!**, 13 (65%) obtained employment and 2 probationers had a Violation of Probation filed. Of the 15 probationers who attended **RSW!** but did not complete the program, 5 obtained employment and 6 had a Violation of Probation filed against them.

Offender employment supports our goal of reducing recidivism and improving community safety. There is an economic benefit as well—gainfully employed probationers working and paying taxes. The criminal justice literature informs us that gainfully employed offenders are less likely to re-offend or violate r probation.



**6th Annual OWDS
Training in
Albany, NY
March 18-22,
May 6-10, and
June 17-21, 2013.**

For more information

Contact:

**cynthia.blair@dcjs.ny.gov
(518) 485-5145**

**DCJS moves to Alfred E.
Smith Building**

The Division of Criminal Justice Services is now located in the Alfred E. Smith State Office Building in downtown Albany. All agency phone numbers remain the same.
**NYS DCJS, OPCA
80 South Swan St.
Third Floor
Albany, NY 12210**

GCDF Instructor Training Planned

After receiving the GCDF through the Center for Credentialing & Education, you are eligible for the 3 day instructor training. Eligibility to facilitate OWDS training begins with getting your GCDF. We encourage all those who have completed the 180 hour OWDS training to apply for GCDF certification. NIC has agreed to facilitate GCDF-instructor training with a Master Trainer as soon as there are enough people who have their GCDF and who would like the training to become OWDS Instructors. Contact Cynthia Blair with your status as soon as possible at cynthia.blair@dcjs.ny.gov

**Global Career
Development
Facilitator
Certification**
is through
The Center for
Credentialing & Education

*Please visit the link below
for more information*

[The CCE Connection
Winter 2013 Newsletter](#)

Add your name to the list



GCDF-Instructors

1. Cynthia Blair
2. Beth Bobela
3. Nancy Chu
4. Matt Charton
5. Art Cooney
6. Sabrina Dargan
7. Ann Faulkner
8. Nigel Franklin
9. Rachel Heasley
10. Elaine Kost
11. Matthew Lucas
12. Elton Maynard
13. Virginia Nepa
14. Mark Pisano
15. Collin Quigley
16. Fran Ricci
17. Rosemarie Salinger
18. Judy Sogoian
19. Dale Wilkinson